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Friday, 20 August 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Acharya (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 70 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Tarawneh (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group in New York, I would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Pakistan, reasserting our full solidarity and sympathy with our brothers and sisters in Pakistan for the disaster that has stricken them, namely the devastating floods that have displaced millions of men, women and children and have spread diseases and epidemics.

We would like to associate ourselves with previous speakers in stressing the need to stand by the people and the Government of Pakistan and to assist them in dealing with this disaster. We would like to express our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for convening these important meetings, and we reaffirm our full support for resolution 64/294, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan". We would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his visit to Pakistan to see for himself the scope of the disaster that has stricken the country. We would like to reaffirm our full support for the United Nations as it assists Pakistan in dealing with this crisis.

The floods that have swept across Pakistan are the worst in its history. They have caused more devastation than the tsunami that swept across South-East Asia in 2004, the earthquake that struck Pakistan in 2005 or the earthquake that hit Haiti recently. This means that it is impossible for Pakistan to deal with the crisis alone, particularly since the devastation in the wake of the floods has affected 20 million people and covered vast areas of the country.

We would like to call upon the international community and all donors to provide immediate emergency relief and assistance to Pakistan and to remain committed to providing further assistance later on for reconstruction and for rebuilding infrastructure that has been destroyed.

We would like to reassert our commitment to providing medium- and long-term assistance to Pakistan. That commitment is based on our keen interest in standing by our brothers, sisters and friends all over the world in times of crisis.

In our national capacity, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has provided assistance that includes a medical team and other specialized teams to deal with water-borne diseases. These teams will be further enhanced in the future. We would like to stress the importance of dealing with endemic and epidemic

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diseases and of vaccinating the population against cholera, polio and other diseases that spread in such crises.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Pierre (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to express my gratitude to the President of the Assembly for convening these plenary meetings, beginning on World Humanitarian Day, to consider the humanitarian situation in Pakistan following the recent flooding that has battered that friendly country. My delegation welcomes the consensus adoption of resolution 64/294, calling for the strengthening of emergency aid for Pakistan and its reconstruction.

Furthermore, my delegation aligns itself with the statements made yesterday by the representatives of Yemen, Suriname and Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Caribbean Community and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan following the most destructive flooding in the history of the country. The floods have caused hundreds of deaths, millions of other victims and heavy material damage, with a particular impact on the country's infrastructure and agriculture.

The people and the Government of Haiti remember the assistance Pakistan provided to them following the earthquake of 12 January 2010. Although Haiti is still encountering considerable problems in rebuilding, more than eight months after one of the most deadly and destructive natural disasters in human history, my country wishes to express its solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan.

It is important to note that within a relatively short period of time, a number of countries have been affected — some more than others — by natural disasters. Because of developing countries' fragile situation, in particular due to their lack of resources, they have not been able to effectively deal with the consequences that such disasters have on human life and the environment. As a result, they require the solidarity of the international community.

The international community has been at my country's side, providing emergency humanitarian assistance and promising to help with its reconstruction. Similarly, together with the Government of Pakistan, the international community has endeavoured to come to the aid of the people of Pakistan. My delegation welcomes such gestures and calls upon the international community to continue those efforts in order to resolve the situation in Pakistan.

Finally, my delegation would like to say to the Government and people of Pakistan that the people and the Government of Haiti are keeping them in their thoughts.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Pálsson (Iceland): The catastrophic events that have devastated up to 20 million people and claimed the lives of more than 1,600 in Pakistan are among the most dramatic of their kind in living memory. I take this opportunity to express the sincere condolences and the deepest sympathy of my Government to the Government and the people of Pakistan for the loss of life and the harrowing human suffering there. We pledge ourselves fully to supporting the international relief effort now under way and welcome the adoption yesterday of resolution 64/294.

In response to the humanitarian emergency in Pakistan, my Government has decided to release $125,000 to the World Food Programme and to allocate an additional $64,000 to various non-governmental organizations. The Icelandic Red Cross has disbursed funds in the amount of $28,000 and fundraising efforts among the Icelandic public have been launched by the Red Cross and UNICEF.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania welcomes the comprehensive briefings made by the President of the Assembly and the Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon. We also thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs Qureshi for his briefing.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

We also welcome and commend the commitment expressed and assistance offered to the people of Pakistan to mitigate the effects of this human tragedy.

It is encouraging to learn that the Secretary-General has taken the initiative to visit Pakistan to see for himself the extent of the damage that has been inflicted upon the people of Pakistan.

The Government and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania express their deepest sorrow at the tragedy of the severe floods and rains that have beset Pakistan and caused such tremendous human loss, infrastructure damage and displacement of the population. We welcome the adoption of resolution 64/294.

The Government and the people of Tanzania offer moral support to all efforts, as requested by the Secretary-General, that will lead to solutions to this challenge. We encourage all forms of support that may help the country to return to its normal way of life and supplement national efforts. We call upon the international community to do everything in its power to augment the current efforts and prevent opportunistic entities from taking undue advantage of this crisis. Indeed, the people of Pakistan should not be left alone.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Maldives.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Maldives.

As the most representative and universal international body, the United Nations has an important role to play as Pakistan faces this unprecedented natural disaster, which has caused tragic loss of life, enormous damage and tremendous suffering. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the United Nations entities for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people affected by the floods in Pakistan.

I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for having convened this judicious, timely and necessary meeting to consider the humanitarian situation in Pakistan.

My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Yemen on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

As Pakistan combats this disaster — one of the gravest the international community has encountered, with a scale of destruction of unprecedented proportions — I would like to express our solidarity with and convey our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan. We share in the grief of the affected families, and we express our heartfelt sympathy and support to those who have lost so much as a result of this colossal catastrophe. We see the suffering of the brave Pakistani people, yet struggle to comprehend the enormity of the tragedy that has befallen their country.

As a gesture of solidarity and sympathy, my Government has already pledged a sum of 3 million Pakistani rupees towards the relief efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan. In addition, both the President and the Vice-President of Maldives have called on all Maldivian people to be forthcoming and generous in extending all assistance possible to our brothers and sisters in Pakistan in their hour of greatest need.

What is unfolding in Pakistan is a reminder of the alarming frequency and ferocity of natural disasters and that we may be facing a world where natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, will drive millions of people from their homes, threaten lives and livelihoods, and destroy environments. The consequences of these disasters are particularly devastating in developing countries, mainly due to the lack of resources, the long-lasting consequences for affected populations and the adverse impacts on the livelihoods of millions of people, which are compounded by a lack of coping mechanisms.

We acknowledge efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan for the rescue and relief of the affected population, in cooperation with the international community. We also recognize that these efforts must be intensified with substantial international support — immediate, short-term and long-term — to address the immediate response as well as the long-term concerns.

These meetings, convened beginning on World Humanitarian Day and during the holy month of Ramadan, are a call for resolute action, to act immediately and with determination, in line with our universal humanitarian beliefs to save lives, ease suffering and ensure the human dignity of the people of Pakistan. We call on the international community to open their hearts and to be generous in their deeds to help ease the suffering of the Pakistani people. We hope and pray that the people of Pakistan will be able to cope with this massive disaster. We wish for strength

for the bereaved families who have lost their loved ones.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): We are grateful to His Excellency Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the Assembly, for having convened these meetings, which began yesterday on a very special day, World Humanitarian Day, in order for us to gain a fuller understanding of the gravity of the floods, their devastation, the admirable determination of the Pakistani people to fight them and the solidarity of the international community with Pakistan. We thank His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, for his prompt visit to the field, his role in coordinating the international relief efforts and his briefing.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Cambodia on behalf of the Asian Group.

As a nation that has experienced frequent and highly destructive natural calamities in recent years, we wish to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to the people and the Government of Pakistan for the phenomenal and horrendous human and material suffering and loss.

While we are making an initial symbolic financial contribution to Pakistani victims, at the same time, we pay tribute to the courage, endurance and resilience of the Pakistani people and Government in stemming the floods, taking care of the immediate needs of those affected and preparing for future eventualities.

We appreciate the solidarity, cooperation and assistance extended to the Pakistani people by the international community, especially through the adoption of resolution 64/294 yesterday and the pledges and commitments made during the course of these meetings. We fully share the common belief that effective solutions to the consequences of the disaster will have to take into account both the immediate and long-term economic, social and environmental implications of the disaster.

Finally, let me reiterate the Vietnamese Government's commitment to humanitarian operations and its readiness to continue to join the United Nations and the international community at large in working with the Pakistani people and Government to best cope with this disaster and to ensure early recovery and sustainable post-disaster development for that brotherly country.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Ebner (Austria): Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the Austrian Government, our condolences to the people and the Government of Pakistan following the tragic loss of life in the monsoon floods.

Austria associates itself with the statement made by Belgium yesterday on behalf of the European Union.

As many speakers have said before me, a disaster of this magnitude demands a global response with the United Nations at its centre. Austria is currently finalizing a humanitarian aid package in response to this crisis that will amount, in total, to approximately €5 million. This humanitarian assistance will be channelled through the United Nations, the International Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations. Once again, we express our deepest solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Jilani (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): I would like first to express, on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), our deepest condolences and sympathies to the people and the Government of Pakistan for the loss of life and human suffering caused by the ongoing flooding.

As underlined by previous speakers, the devastating flooding is unprecedented and requires a massive and immediate response. The IFRC Field Assessment and Coordination Team is coordinating with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society to conduct a detailed assessment. This assessment is contributing to the design of a multi-sector plan of action to address the affected population's urgent needs for relief, emergency health services and shelter, as well as longer-term recovery needs, including the restoration of livelihoods.

In recognition of the magnitude of the disaster and the growing needs of the affected population, we are significantly scaling up our operation. In a revised appeal issued yesterday in support of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the IFRC outlined a plan to provide humanitarian assistance to over 900,000 people over a period of 18 months. This emergency appeal for $73.6 million more than quadruples our preliminary appeal.

The emergency appeal will support the implementation of emergency relief distribution of both food and non-food items, the provision of emergency shelter and support for owner-driven reconstruction of houses, the delivery of health services, the provision of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene promotion, and early recovery support through livelihood interventions for 150,000 families.

The Secretary-General of the IFRC, who visited Pakistan last week, confirmed that:

> "This is one of the worst disasters I have ever witnessed. Millions of people need help, and we must all work together to meet the huge challenges that lie before us."

Coordination among humanitarian actors is essential. As an auxiliary to the Government, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society has a long-standing relationship with the National Disaster Management Authority and liaises closely with the provincial and district-level disaster management authorities. The IFRC, Pakistan Red Crescent Society and partner national Societies are also coordinating with other humanitarian organizations, including through the cluster system.

The Movement partners, including IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross, have been working in Pakistan for decades. A number of partner national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, including the Turkish Red Crescent, the Saudi Red Crescent, the Qatar Red Crescent, the Kuwait Red Crescent, the Iranian Red Crescent, the German Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and the American Red Cross, have already an ongoing operation in Pakistan.

It is imperative to use the occasion to highlight the dramatic increase in extreme weather events and their humanitarian impact. We have joined many others on so many occasions to emphasize the need to address that impact on the most vulnerable, to invest in disaster risk reduction, to enhance preparedness and to build community resilience.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the call made by so many speakers yesterday and today to collectively commit to meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of the affected population and to planning for the longer-term recovery.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/30 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the observer for the Asian Development Bank.

Mr. MacCormac (Asian Development Bank): May I begin, on behalf of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), by extending our deepest sympathies to the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people who have been affected by this terrible disaster.

The flooding in Pakistan is a catastrophe of epic proportions. The sheer number of individuals affected by this tragedy, 20 million, is almost incomprehensible. About 6 million of these need urgent relief and shelter support. Beyond the initial relief efforts now under way, Pakistan faces a long and hard road to recovery. Schools, health centres, roads, water supply facilities, power, houses and transmission lines need to be rebuilt and repaired. Two million hectares of crops are underwater, posing a major threat to food security.

The recovery effort must be well-coordinated at all levels, beginning with the damage and needs assessment. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have been asked to lead this assessment in close cooperation with the Government of Pakistan, the United Nations and other partners. The Asian Development Bank already has an advance team of staff on the ground, which will increase to 100 staff in the next few days. A high-level team is in Islamabad for initial consultations.

ADB will lead the damage and needs assessment in seven sectors: public administration, transport and communication, energy, irrigation, water and sanitation, health and social protection. The Asian Development Bank will also lead in designing the overall implementation arrangements for the reconstruction efforts.

The recovery will, of course, require a huge financial commitment from all development partners. I am privileged to inform the Assembly that the Asian

Development Bank's support for reconstruction over the next two years will be at least $2 billion. We also plan to establish and administer a special trust fund to provide a vehicle for other development partners to channel their contributions for reconstruction support. To meet urgent relief needs, the Asian Development Bank has also approved a grant of $3 million from the Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund.

The future of 20 million Pakistani people depends on our decisive, substantial and effective assistance. The Asian Development Bank has significant experience and expertise in helping developing Asian countries to recover and rebuild following natural disasters, including such catastrophes as the 2005 Pakistan earthquake and the 2004 Asian tsunami. We, at the Asian Development Bank, are firmly committed to play our leadership role in the immense job that lies ahead, in close collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and other development partners.

The Acting President: Having heard the statements from the Member States and the Observers, I now have the pleasure of giving the floor to His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): I take the floor as we complete two days of hearing from all our friends around the world.

When on 28 July we started sounding out Members here as to the unfolding catastrophe in Pakistan, we were very worried, as there was scepticism, and initial responses spoke more of a trust deficit than of actual answers to the unfolding tragedy.

Over the past three weeks, there have been millions and millions of casualties. Today, as three more districts have come under water, the figure is no longer 20 million: it ought to be closer to 22 million. As the river rampages on its path towards the sea, I would like first and foremost to thank the President of the General Assembly, who flew back post-haste, despite his age, and convened these plenary meetings of the Assembly. Despite his not being too well, he sat with us most of yesterday, and his concern as to what is happening in Pakistan was in many ways solace to us, showing that people cared that much. I would like to thank the President for his very deep interest in the welfare of the oft-forgotten common man, not only in Pakistan, but anywhere in world. We pray for his early recovery, as he is not well.

The Secretary-General has played a yeoman's role. He stood up and got himself counted when perhaps other world leaders were talking in deficit terms, so to speak. He did not wait in the face of scepticism. He addressed himself to the problem. He not only addressed himself to the problem; as he saw it getting worse — before it got completely out of hand — he went down to Pakistan on very short notice, an 18-hour trip. He himself then spent the whole day touring areas where millions and millions waited for hope. He carried, on behalf of the United Nations, a beacon of hope.

He not only carried a beacon of hope. He came back and addressed the matter immediately. He started calling upon the world not to wake up to scepticism, but to step up to the plate and realize that this is one of the greatest calamities ever to befall mankind. Perhaps in terms of numbers, of those who have lost homes and are displaced, it is one of the great natural disasters of history, which will be recorded in the red blood that has flowed since the tragedy began.

In fact, a lot of people have asked why there have been only 1,500 fatalities. I remind them that the figure of 1,500 relates to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, in the north. Subsequently, when the river swelled to over 100 kilometres in width, there was no means of going into that river and counting the dead. And we do not know yet how many have perished. When a river expands from one kilometre to 100, one can imagine how access will be denied to anyone trying to enter those realms. So, we can only hold our breath and hope that the casualty figures have been lower than feared.

I want now to speak of the very, very strong message that the Assembly has sent to the world. Over two days, more than 70 representatives spoke, giving us, by their words and their deeds and their support, more hope than I can describe: there are not enough words in my vocabulary to thank them. All those who stood at this rostrum talked about their strong support for the poor people of Pakistan, and that was solace indeed as well.

We thank all participants. We thank the entire Assembly and its membership. We thank the world, and we have absolutely no hesitation in saying this. To some who asked me yesterday whether we have accepted our neighbour's help, I am proud to say that we have, because something like this transcends

anything, certainly politics. I am glad that the Prime Minister and the people of Pakistan accepted from our neighbours not only the solace of their Government and their people but the support that they have envisaged and announced here, as well as bilaterally between the two countries.

This is a time when all of us, the children of Adam, must rise to the occasion. Such a calamity forces great changes in history, and politics cannot stand up to them. These are the disasters that change the destiny and course of nations, and there is a long road ahead.

I am indeed grateful for the role played by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). And I am very, very pleased that the last statement delivered from this rostrum was that of the representative of the Asian Development Bank, which has taken upon itself the assessment of damage. And, going beyond the initial stage, his words about raising $2 billion for Pakistan's needs in what is considered an initial response to the damage are indeed heartening. I know it is going to be much more than that, but that is a good beginning.

To those in the world who say that the United Nations does not do anything, I say, "Come to Pakistan". Within 48 hours, the United Nations made itself available through help from the World Food Programme, from the United Nations Population Fund, from UNICEF, from the United Nations Development Programme and from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. Come to us and see what they are doing. There are over 200 people — with 100 more coming, for a total of 300 — providing leadership everywhere and trying to reach people. Come to us, where it can be seen how in this Hall we have created hope. Come to us where we can see that affiliate associates like the ICRC, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are giving and providing hope. The message from here to the people of Pakistan is: "Do not give up hope".

It is difficult; it will take time. But we have the community of the world standing with us. The comity of nations represented in this Hall will not let any part of the world down. That is the legacy of the Ban Ki-moon era in this particular institution, and it should be remembered for its compassion. We in Asia feel proud that this compassion is echoed from within our ranks and from our part of the world.

With that, even to the sceptics, who have now joined ranks, I say, "Thank you". We hope their scepticism produces more transparency in the handling of this whole process. One of the great answers regarding transparency is that the United Nations is spearheading the effort and is integrated with the agencies in Pakistan. I am sure that their oversight will not be any less than that of any other institution in the world.

I thank the President of the General Assembly, I thank the members and their representatives and I thank the entire staff of the United Nations. I thank the world for listening.

The Acting President: I thank the Permanent Representative of Pakistan for his statement. I also would like to take note of the special appreciation he expressed to the President of the General Assembly as well as to the Secretary-General and the Member States and observers whose representatives spoke here over the past two days. I would also like to reciprocate his sentiments, when he said that the United Nations has truly given an integrated response and came to the rescue of Pakistan immediately, which will be an example for situations in many other countries as well.

On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, I should like to thank Member States for their active participation in these deliberations. They have all demonstrated your solidarity and sympathy with the people of Pakistan, and our discussions and its outcome have provided a framework for mobilizing international support and assistance.

I think in the two days of our meetings here, we saw and we heard a profusion of goodwill and solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan in this hour of grief and hour of need. All have applauded the resilience of the Pakistani people and have wished for their speedy recovery. There was also a general understanding that there is a need for stronger global support and assistance to deal with these unprecedented and catastrophic floods in Pakistan.

With these words, the Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 70.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.